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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PROBLEMS OF A PEACE LEAGUE

SIR,—Perhaps I have overlooked it, but I have not happened to see a detailed development of the idea of a "League for Peace," or of an "International Court or Arbitration League," to determine questions that may arise hereafter between the nations, or some of the nations, of the earth.

The titles of these proposed bodies are attractive, but how is the "League" or "International Court," or whatever it may be called, to be formed? If it is to be composed of the representatives of "Leading Nations," what nations are referred to? and what entitles them to be so-called? If all nations are eligible to representation on acceptance of the conditions of membership, and some great and warlike nations decline, would not the whole scheme be a failure, since each member of the league, and all together, would then have to arm against the non-members?

But, assuming that all nations, or those coming within the grade of eligibility, express a wish to join, on what basis will the number of representatives be apportioned? It is not to be presumed that such nations as Great Britain, Germany, France and the United States would consent to the plan of a single representative from each member, and thus place themselves on a level as to voting strength with Spain, Portugal or Denmark, because, in that case there would be no "Great Powers"; and the present dominant nations would be outvoted and overruled in any material contention with the lesser Powers. If the United States, for example, were to have but one representative in the Court, the Monroe Doctrine would "go glimmering," for the representatives of the European nations would annul a doctrine that is offensive to all of them. For that matter, the Monroe Doctrine would be doomed, no matter what the representation of the United States might be, unless, combined with the South American and Central Republics, it should command a majority vote, which is improbable. So, any doctrine of Great Britain as to "Search and Seizure," and interference with mails, now held adversely to the contentions of neutral nations, would be swept away by the remorseless votes of the present neutral and minor Powers. Therefore, the limitation of a single representative from a nation is not to be thought of.

Should representation be in proportion to the superficial area under the government of any nation? That would give Russia the largest representation, if, in such case, the mother-country alone is to be considered. If the area of colonies is to be included, the British Empire would be first, Russia second, France third and the United States fourth. But this would be unfair, since much of the territory of Great Britain and Russia is uninhabitable, and incapable of supporting any population.

Should it be according to the national wealth and material assets? That would be almost impossible to estimate, and would change more rapidly than any other basis. Should it be according to military and naval strength—that is, according to the ability of a nation to defend itself, a condition which now gives it rank as a real Power? There is something to be said in favor of that as a basis; but how is military strength to be rated as against naval strength? One can see a never-ending dispute on that question between Great Britain on the one hand, and Russia, Germany and France on the other. Furthermore, it was demonstrated in the Russo-Japanese war, and is being demonstrated in the present war, that intelligence and efficiency count more than numbers. The great Russian army seems almost a playing thing as against the Germans; and the Serbian and Rumanian armies have been scattered like chaff before the wind by more intelligent and better trained troops.

Should population be the basis? That works fairly well for some of the deliberative bodies in America, although it does not apply to the Senate nor to the Courts; and by trick legislation and election machinery is abused in a large section of the country. Here again, if the representation is confined to the mother country, China would rank first and Russia second, a deplorable situation. If colonies are to be included, the British Empire would take the lead, but China would be second—still deplorable, and quite unfair, because Great Britain would profit by the ignorant and superstitious masses of India and the savages of Africa as against the intelligence of small nations like Holland and Switzerland.

If based upon the present representation in the law-making bodies of the nations respectively, Great Britain would cut a small figure (to which she would not consent), for her colonies have no votes in Parliament. Should she be represented in a World Congress by counting her colonials whom she does not now consider as entitled to a seat in her own Parliament?

And that suggests another possible basis, viz.: educational rank. In that case, Germany would come first and Denmark, with her intelligent colony of Iceland, or perhaps Sweden, would be second.

A representation based on literacy would reduce Russia to a fifth rate Power, or lower, and of course she would not consent to that.

Ex-President Taft, in a recent after-dinner speech in New York, admitted the great difficulties of the proposition, but thought it "could be worked out." However, he gave no hint as to a practical solution. And President Wilson, in his address to the Senate on this subject, omitted to give a plan (if he has any) for carrying out his ideas.

It is not a sufficient answer to say that because these schemes are worked out in the respective nations, they may be worked out in a League of Nations. In the separate unit, the plan of representation is formed by the vote, or with the assent of the majority, for the supposed best interests of the people, according to their condition and numbers, and does not involve the possibility of lowering the rank of the nation, or a departure from its traditional or announced international policies. It is for internal purposes only.

As soon as the standing of a nation is involved, a new element enters into consideration. The plan adopted for domestic government might be fatal to representation and influence in an international body.

I can think of no plan or basis but which, if adopted, would unfavorably

affect both great and small Powers, and it is inconceivable that nations so affected would consent to such adoption.

Is it the purpose of the remaining Powers, in that case, to compel consent? If so, then a new world-war will begin at once, with indefinite continuance.

The foregoing will apply, I think, not only to questions of national honor and policies, but to strictly justiciable questions, capable of settlement by a finding of facts and an application of legal principles. For a permanent court or congress, the nations would insist on a proportionate representation; else there would be no check to the jealousies and ambitions of the smaller Powers.

Even if the representatives of the Powers affected are not allowed to sit in a matter involving themselves, their strength for future action, in other questions, would be considered, and would operate as a deterrent to any marked injustice or extravagant judgment.

The whole scheme, therefore, it seems to me, is based upon the plan of representation, which presents a maze of difficulties.

The establishment of a World Court seems to me like the dream of an idealist; but, being open to a contrary conviction, I have written this with the purpose of bringing out the views of others, not as to its desirability, but its possibility.

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[Whatever objection may reasonably be urged against the projected World-League for Peace, the objection that it is "the dream of an idealist" is not, as our correspondent seems to think, a crushing one. Every great liberalizing movement that has in the past lifted humanity a little higher above the brutes has had its origin in "the dream of an idealist." Lincoln dreamed an idealist's dream. Those who insisted that the abolition of slavery was a fantastic impossibility were "practical men." And what nation today is, *par excellence*, the nation of "efficiency," of practical men? We leave the inevitable answer, with its implications, to be brooded upon by our valued correspondent.—EDITOR.]

IS THE PEACE LEAGUE A BROKEN REED?

SIR,—In criticizing the article, "The League to Enforce Peace," appearing in the January number of *THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW*, my object is to counteract a false sense of security that might arise from the acceptance of the principles underlying the programme of the League.

Without discussing the wording of the programme, the objection is to the assumption that the provisions of this agreement, or any similar one, would be lived up to by the signatories. It is the objection mentioned by Mr. Lowell—that it would prove ineffective.

My contention is that the actuating motive of nations in their international relations has been (with a few possible exceptions) self-interest, and will remain the same for a long time to come, and therefore the members of the League would fail to perform their part of the agreement in cases where it was not to their interest and advantage to do so.

In reasoning as to the probable courses of Governments under certain conditions that may arise in the future, the best we can do is to deduce their courses of action from what history tells us they have done in similar